

## MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

## INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

part of Cloverfields

AND/OR COMMON

John Benton Farm

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

approx. 1 3/4 miles northeast of Stevensville

CITY, TOWN

Stevensville

☒ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

4th

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Queen Anne's

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

## CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT☒ BUILDING(S)☐ STRUCTURE☐ SITE☐ OBJECT

## OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC☒ PRIVATE☐ BOTH

## PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED

## STATUS

☐ OCCUPIED☒ UNOCCUPIED☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

## ACCESSIBLE

☐ YES: RESTRICTED☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED☐ NO

## PRESENT USE

☒ AGRICULTURE☐ MUSEUM☐ COMMERCIAL☐ PARK☐ EDUCATIONAL☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☐ ENTERTAINMENT☐ RELIGIOUS☐ GOVERNMENT☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ TRANSPORTATION☐ MILITARY☐ OTHER:**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

John C. Benton

Telephone #:

STREET &amp; NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Stevensville

☐ VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Maryland 21666

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE.

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Queen Anne's County Courthouse

Liber #: WHC 6

Folio #: 17

Wills#: WTB 3

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Courthouse Square

Folio#: 468

CITY, TOWN

Centreville

STATE

Maryland 21617

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

QA-2980

CONDITION

—EXCELLENT  
☒ GOOD  
—FAIR

—DETERIORATED  
—RUINS  
—UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

—UNALTERED  
☒ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE ?  
—MOVED DATE

See  
BCH 100.1

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Post and Plank Farm Building:

This building is presently located to the southwest of the house, and faces west, forming one side of a loose "courtyard" created by a 20th century barn, a nineteenth century granary, and several minor buildings. According to Mr. Benton, the present owner, this building and the granary (QA-298 E) were located to the northeast of the house when his family bought the farm in 1916, and were moved to their present location in the early 1920's.

The original building consists of a post and plank structure 14 feet wide by 18 feet long. Implement sheds have been constructed against both sides of the building, and the front and rear gables are covered with vertical weatherboards, giving it a form quite common for granaries and corn cribs throughout this region. Although these sheds are 20th century in construction, probably dating to the 1920's, they evidently replace similar earlier sheds, as the exterior face of the protected side walls show little if any evidence of weathering. Abundant heavy timbers with unused mortises are evident in both

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

## CONTINUATION SHEET

## 7.1 DESCRIPTION

sheds, suggesting that they were reused from the earlier sheds.

The front wall of the original building has been removed and replaced with a frame wall. There is a large doorway in the southwest corner of the front gable. The original door location was either in the center of the same gable, or just to the left of center.

The interior is not partitioned. There is a ladder on the front gable wall rising to the loft. Vertical boards have been nailed to the interior face of the log plank walls.

The roof is of common rafter construction, with the rafters resting on a flat false plate supported by the floor joists, and each rafter pair is joined at the ridge with a mortise and tenon joint secured with a wooden peg. The collars are rather small and are riven rather than sawn. These have been half-dovetailed into the rafters and secured with a single wrought nail through each joint. Although the roof could possibly have once been clapboard, nail holes on the upper face of the rafters where they are protected by the later sheds suggest a nailing pattern more adaptable to nailing strips used to support a shingle roof.

## CONTINUATION SHEET

## 7.2 DESCRIPTION

In its manner of construction, the early section of the building is virtually identical to other post and plank buildings in the county. The horizontal log planks are hand sawn from hewn logs, and set into individual mortises in the corner posts, with long pegs driven through to secure them. A single intermediate post is laid against the inner face of each wall and secured to each plank with a single peg.

Several minor variations are worth noting, however. The intermediate post on the center of the rear (east) gable wall is not mortised into the top plate, as are the side posts. This same feature may be found at the Cray House in Stevensville (QA-259), and is due to the gable top plates being the same thickness as the wall planks, eliminating the overhang found on the side wall top plates. Where this occurs, the top of the intermediate post is generally beveled off to reduce the thickness of the post sufficiently to drive nails through the post into the face of the plate. In this particular example, the intermediate post is unusually thick, and the beveled surface has been finished off with chamfered edges. It is interesting that such care was taken on the top of this post, but that chamfers were not used anywhere

## CONTINUATION SHEET

## 7.3 DESCRIPTION

else on the building.

A second feature unique to this building are four downbraces applied to the exterior face of the side walls. They are not incorporated into the framing but are laid against the exterior face of the corner posts, the horizontal planks, and the sill. They are held in place by pegs, but in several instances, the pegs were omitted, and large, machine made nails were substituted. There is no evidence of heavy weathering, though it is possible the side walls have always been protected by some type of sheds. The manner in which the braces have been applied to the building, rather than incorporated into it, and the presence of machine nails strongly suggests that these were not original, though probably added at a relatively early date.

Downbraces may also be found on the interior of the west gable wall. The visible portions of these braces are all pegged, with no nails evident, but they are not mortised into the corner posts as one would expect, and are therefore probably also later.

One curious feature of the building is the presence of short, heavy vertical timbers adjacent to each intermediate post. These are identical in proportion

## CONTINUATION SHEET

## 7.4 DESCRIPTION

to the intermediate posts, but only rise about two feet above the floor. They are pegged into the horizontal planks of the wall. There is no clear evidence to explain what purpose these timbers served.

Dating evidence for this building is confined to the consistent use of wrought nails throughout the early fabric of the building. The careful craftsmanship displayed in its construction, and the use of riven collars strongly suggest that this is an 18th century building, though a more precise date is impossible.

**8 SIGNIFICANCE**

GA-298D

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Notable as one of approximately two dozen recorded examples of post-and-plank construction in Tidewater Maryland, this particular building is atypical in several respects. Most of the buildings thus far identified appear to date to the second quarter of the 19th century, and are generally either smoke houses or small dwellings. This building is atypical in that it was evidently used as some type of farm building, perhaps a granary, a crib, or a small tobacco house. The evidence of wrought nails and riven collars also place it among the earliest recorded examples, certainly dating no later than the early 19th century and more likely dating to the last quarter of the 18th century.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY \_\_\_\_\_

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

Orlando Ridout V, Historic Sites Surveyor

ORGANIZATION

Queen Anne's County Historical Society

DATE

6/26/78

STREET &amp; NUMBER

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Centreville

STATE

Maryland

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust  
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 267-1438



